

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2013 Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Fishery News Release 1**

#### **2013 Kuskokwim Bay Salmon Outlook and Management Strategy**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for commercial salmon fisherman in the Kuskokwim Area.

#### **2013 KUSKOKWIM BAY COMMERCIAL OUTLOOK**

The Kuskokwim Bay has no formal forecast for salmon returns. Broad expectations are developed based on parent-year escapements and recent year trends. It is expected that king and sockeye salmon harvest in 2013 will be lower than in 2012 due to king salmon conservation measures. Anticipated available surpluses for commercial harvest are expected to range from 1,500 to 6,000 king; 60,000 to 110,000 sockeye; 60,000 to 130,000 chum; and 40,000 to 80,000 coho salmon. Harvest may be affected by salmon abundance, participation, market conditions, and processor capacity.

#### **2013 KUSKOKWIM BAY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

##### **Subsistence Fishery**

ADF&G will be in contact with Kuskokwim Bay subsistence fishermen to determine if subsistence needs will be met. Subsistence fishing will be allowed seven days per week prior to the commercial salmon fishing season. Once the commercial fishing season begins, subsistence fishery closures will be 16 hours before, during, and six hours after each commercial fishing period.

##### **Commercial Fishery**

##### **King Salmon Conservation**

In 2012, king salmon abundance across Alaska was below average. The escapement in the Goodnews River drainage was below the established escapement goals and the Kanektok River had a weak return. The king salmon returns in the Kanektok and Goodnews River drainages are expected to be below average in 2013. Also, given the late and cold spring, king salmon run timing is expected to be late. With poor run performance in recent years, king salmon

conservation is warranted in the District 4 (Quinhagak) and District 5 (Goodnews Bay) commercial fisheries.

#### District 4

ADF&G intends to meet with Quinhagak residents prior to the commercial fishing season. The District 4 commercial fishery will be managed in accordance with the *District 4 Salmon Management Plan 5 ACC 07.367*. It is anticipated the District 4 commercial fishery will likely open in early July. ADF&G will closely monitor subsistence harvest in Quinhagak to assess relative run abundance and run timing. Based on this information, the first commercial opening may be earlier or later than anticipated. A coho salmon management directed fishery is anticipated to occur, late July through August given adequate run strength.

#### District 5

ADF&G intends to meet with Goodnews Bay area residents prior to the commercial fishing season. It is anticipated the District 5 commercial fishery will likely open in early July. ADF&G will closely monitor subsistence harvest in Goodnews Bay and Platinum to assess relative run abundance and run timing. Based on this information, the first commercial opening may be earlier or later than anticipated. A coho salmon management directed fishery is anticipated to occur, late July through August given adequate run strength.

#### **Sport Fishery**

Sport fishing daily bag and possession limits for king salmon have been reduced, by Emergency Order 3-KS-03-13, to one fish over 20 inches in length in all waters draining into Kuskokwim Bay south of the south bank of Warehouse Creek and north of Cape Newenham. The Kuskokwim Bay king salmon sport-fishing season will close by regulation on July 26.

#### **Inseason Assessment and Research**

Inseason indicators of salmon run strength include weir escapement projects, verbal subsistence catch reports, commercial catch statistics, and aerial escapement surveys. Weirs will be operated on the Kanektok and the Middle Fork Goodnews rivers to monitor salmon escapements and collect biological data. The Kanektok River weir will cease operations in mid-August to address operational concerns caused by high water events common in August and September.

For more information contact:

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